



VENDOR ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Mississippi State Department of
Health WIC Program
August 2019

OVERVIEW

Background to the WIC Program

Vendor Selection Criteria

Vendor Application Process

Question & Answer

What's Next



WIC MISSION

“To safeguard the health of low-income women, infants, and children up to age five who are at nutrition risk by providing nutritious foods to supplement diets, information on healthy eating, and referrals to health care”





HISTORY OF MISSISSIPPI WIC

Mississippi WIC Program was established in 1972

The Program provides healthy food choices and nutrition education for mothers and families in Mississippi

The Program served 90,000 Mississippians in Federal Fiscal Year (FY) 2018

Services are available in all Mississippi counties through a grant from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS)

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS INCLUDE



Mississippi resident



Income guidelines



WIC category

Pregnant and Postpartum women
Infants
Children up to 5 years of age



Identified nutrition risk



Adjunctive eligibility

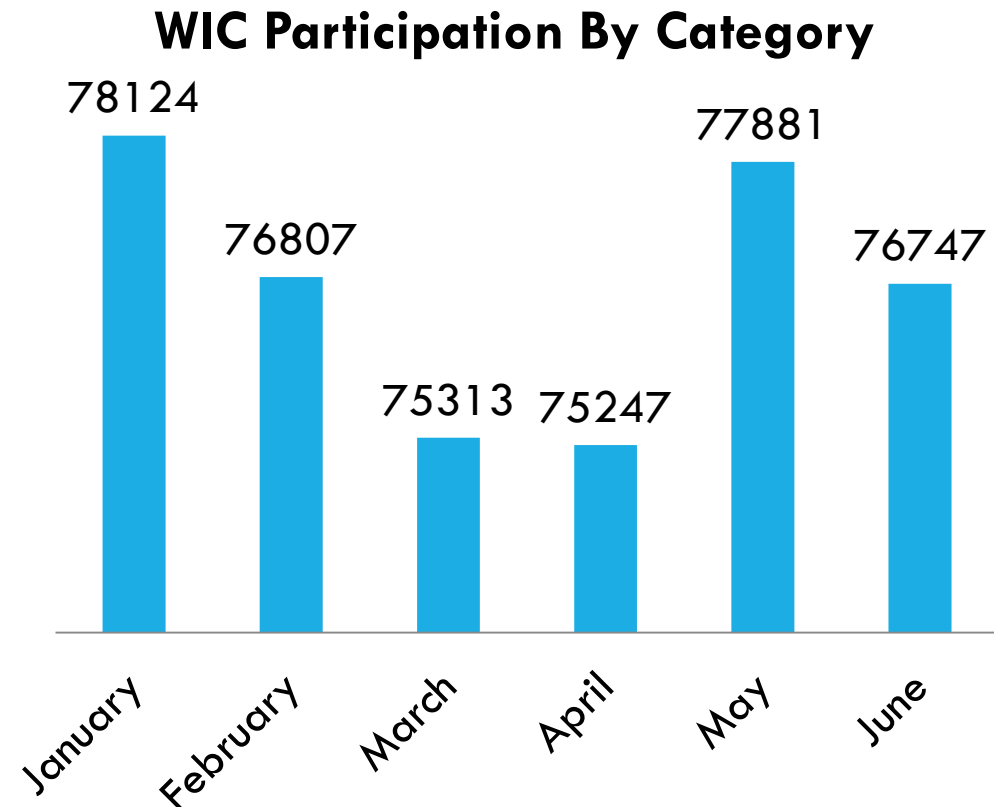
Medicaid
SNAP
TANF

MSDH WIC PARTICIPANTS

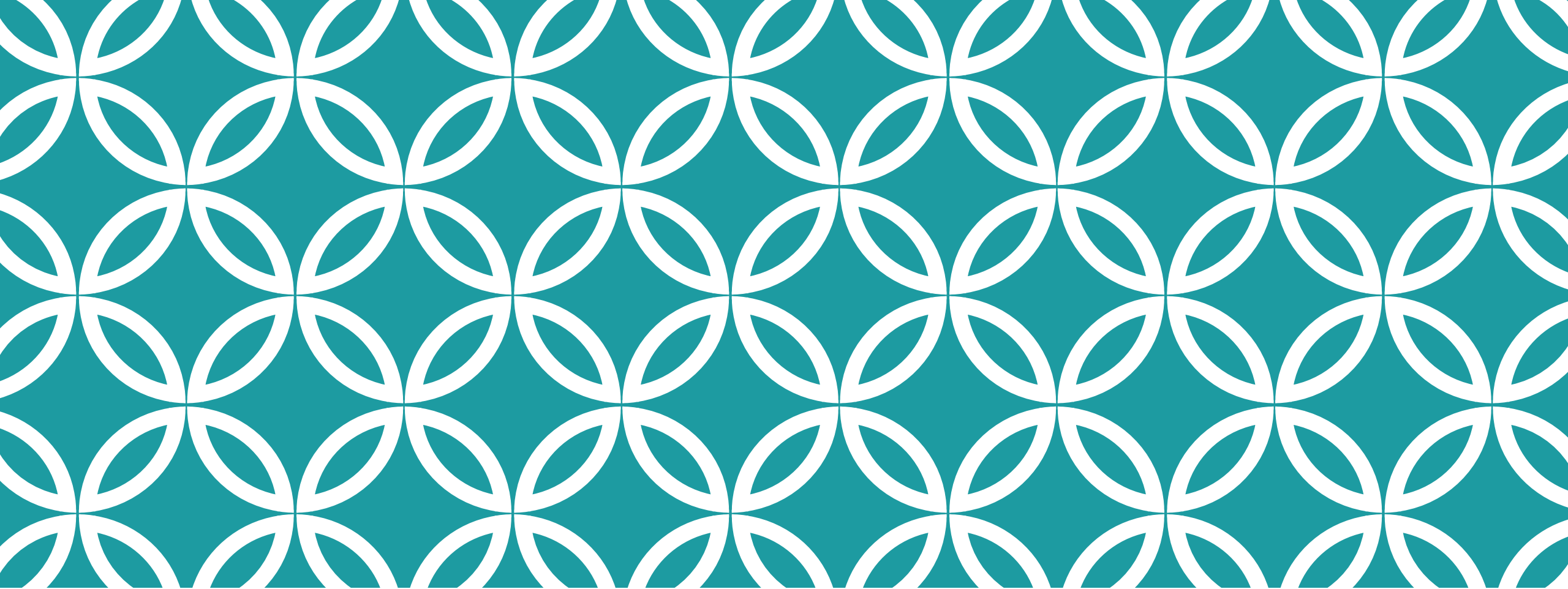
MSDH WIC currently serves about 84,000 Mississippians monthly

The Program is available statewide through local health departments and non-profit agencies.

An average of 2572 infants and children currently receive special formula from the Program.



Data from CY 2019



VENDOR SELECTION CRITERIA

The following criteria applies to retail grocers and commissaries. These criteria are designed to ensure that vendor participation in the MSDH WIC Program will adequately fulfill the needs of the WIC Program's participants.

VENDOR SELECTION CRITERIA

- 1) EBT capable as defined in CFR 246.12(aa)(4)(ii)
- 2) WIC Vendors must charge competitive prices.

At the time of authorization, competitive prices are evaluated based on shelf price surveys. During re-authorization, competitive prices will be evaluated using redemption data.

VENDOR SELECTION CRITERIA CONT.

- 3) WIC vendors must meet business integrity criteria. The State Agency will rely solely on facts known to it and representations made by the vendor applicant on its vendor application and during background checks.

Vendors will NOT be authorized if during the last six (6) years they (or any of the vendor applicant's owners, officers, or managers) have been convicted of or had a civil judgment entered against them for any activity indicating a lack of business integrity.

Additional activities indicating a lack of business integrity include fraud, antitrust violations, embezzlement, theft, forgery, burglary, bribery, falsification or destruction of records, making false statements, receiving stolen property, making false claims, and obstruction of justice.

VENDOR SELECTION CRITERIA CONT.

- 4) WIC Vendors are expected to redeem an average of \$1,000 in eWIC benefit redemptions over a period of 6 months shall.

An average of less than \$1,000 in monthly redemption activity shall be treated as a lack of demand for a store.

Volume of sales will be confirmed after one year of participation and bi-annually thereafter. If WIC sales do not average \$1,000 in monthly WIC redemptions after application approval over a 6-month period, the vendor will be terminated.

VENDOR SELECTION CRITERIA CONT.

5. WIC Vendors must comply with all federal, state, and local licensing and permitting requirements including Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Mississippi State Department of Health.
6. WIC Vendors must be Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) authorized vendors in good standing with FNS. MSDH WIC may not authorize a vendor that is currently disqualified from SNAP or that has been assessed a SNAP civil money penalty (CMP) for hardship and the disqualification period that would otherwise have been imposed has not expired.

VENDOR SELECTION CRITERIA CONT.

- 7) WIC Vendors must be open for business year-round at least 9 hours per day and six days per week. Store hours must be posted and visible to the public.
- 8) WIC Vendors must be a business whose primary purpose is to be a retail grocer. Direct distribution outlets and wholesale food establishments are not eligible.

VENDOR SELECTION CRITERIA CONT.

- 9) WIC Vendors must be in a fixed location. No mobile stores will be authorized. The redemption of eWIC benefits and the provision of WIC foods must be within the confines (walls) of the store. The use of drive-up windows is not allowed.
- 10) WIC Vendors must have a minimum of 9,000 square feet of continuous retail space allocated solely for food products.

This square footage does not include storage areas, meat cutting areas, beer and soda coolers, walk-in coolers, office space, and areas where other non-food products are displayed such as hair care products, detergents, soaps, cleaning supplies, pet products, and etc.



VENDOR SELECTION CRITERIA CONT.

- 1 1) WIC Vendors must have a minimum of three (3) operational cash registers.
- 1 2) WIC Vendors must be free of any conflict of interest, as defined by applicable State laws, regulations, and policies, between the vendor and the Program or its contracted providers.

Conflict of interest includes any activities which would tend to influence a decision, create a bias, or cause prejudice that would favor one side, conflict with the Program's or contracted providers' employees' duties, or that conflict with the Program's mission or goals.

VENDOR SELECTION CRITERIA CONT.

1 3) The State Agency will NOT authorize any vendors who expect to derive more than fifty percent (50%) of their store's revenue from the sale of WIC foods.

1 4) WIC Vendors are prohibited from offering incentive items solely to WIC participants in an effort to encourage participants to redeem their eWIC benefits at those stores.

An incentive item is defined as an item or service provided by a vendor to attract customers or encourage customer loyalty. Section 246.12(h)(3)(iii) of the Federal WIC regulations requires vendors offer program participants the same courtesies offered to any other customer as it relates to both food prices and services. If coupons, discounts, or other promotional specials are provided to non-WIC customers these must be given to WIC participants and vice versa.

VENDOR SELECTION CRITERIA CONT.

- 15) WIC Vendors must comply with all Federal Regulations including the United States Department of Agriculture Regulations at 7 CFR 246, State laws, rules, and regulations as they relate to WIC Vendors.
- 16) WIC Vendors must be accessible to monitoring by state and federal officials without prior notice.

This includes but is not limited to making available all appropriate documents and records pertaining to vendor purchases, sales, and inventory, including food sales, gross sales, non-taxable food sales, sales and usage tax forms, invoices of food purchases, etc., upon request and within two (2) business days. Records must be kept for a minimum of 3 years.

VENDOR SELECTION CRITERIA CONT.

- 17) WIC Vendors must obtain their infant formula from an approved source found in the State Agency's formula listing found on the WIC Program website. This list includes authorized formula vendors, formula wholesalers, distributors, and manufacturers. No other sources may be used to obtain infant formula.
- 18) A store that has been sold by a previous owner(s) in an attempt to circumvent a WIC sanction shall not be authorized.
Circumstances could include, but are not limited to, selling a store to a relative by blood or marriage or to any individual or organization for less than its fair market value.
- 19) WIC Vendors must stock a minimum variety and quantity of WIC approved supplemental foods at all times.



VENDOR AUTHORIZATION PROCESS



PHASE 1

Vendor applicants must complete and submit all required application documents to the WIC Program.

All information MUST be complete for the application to be processed.

Required documentation to process applications:

Corporation or Partnership (ownership of 2 or more stores under one corporate entity)

- Vendor application
- Store brand declaration form
- Additional Store Attachment
- Form W9
- Copy of Business License
- Copy of Food Sanitation License
- Copy of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Permit
- Copy of Lease, Deed, or Bill of sale
- Vendor price survey (for each store)

Sole Proprietorship (ownership of 1 store under 1 corporate entity)

- Vendor application
- Store brand declaration form
- Form W9
- Copy of Business License
- Copy of Food Sanitation License
- Copy of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Permit
- Copy of Lease, Deed, or Bill of sale
- Vendor price survey

Military Commissary

- Vendor Application
- Store brand declaration form

Pharmacy

- Vendor Application
- Form W9
- Copy of Lease, Deed, or Bill of sale
- Vendor price survey (for each store)

PHASE 2

The WIC Vendor application will be reviewed for completeness.

Vendor applicants will be notified by email of missing, incomplete, or unsigned documents within two weeks of receipt of the application.

Any incomplete and/or unsigned documents will not be processed. Vendors will be allowed up to two (2) opportunities to submit a completed application and required documentation.

Incomplete applications must be completed and re-submitted to the Program within thirty (30) calendar days from the postmarked date of the returned application. Applicants who fail to return a completed application and/ or required documentation will not be considered for authorization.

PHASE 3

The State Agency will notify the vendor applicant of receipt of the application via email, review the application for completeness, evaluate the application for cost competitiveness, and conduct an on-site inspection to verify the accuracy of the information provided in the application.

The State Agency has sixty (60) days from notification to the vendor of the completed application to conduct the on-site inspection and determine if the vendor meets selection criteria.

The on-site inspection helps verify the vendor meets requirements. No agreement will be awarded prior to the onsite inspection and no agreement will be issued unless the store meets all requirements necessary to become a WIC Vendor.

PHASE 4

Store owners, store managers, and/or store training staff will be required to attend a new vendor training session.

New vendor training will be offered regionally. Vendors who fail to attend training will not be authorized.



PHASE 5

A WIC Vendor Agreement will be sent via email for vendor's signature after which it should be returned to the State Agency for further processing.

The State Agency may take up to sixty (60) days to process the agreement.

PHASE 6

The agreement will be considered effective when all signatures have been obtained, training has been received, and the store is notified of the date it can begin to accept eWIC.

The applicant is not allowed to transact WIC benefits before the date specified. Any applicant found to be accepting WIC prior to having a fully executed agreement will not be authorized.



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Application and supporting documents will be made available on the MSDH website under the WIC Vendor Information section.

Webinars with details for the application process are forthcoming.

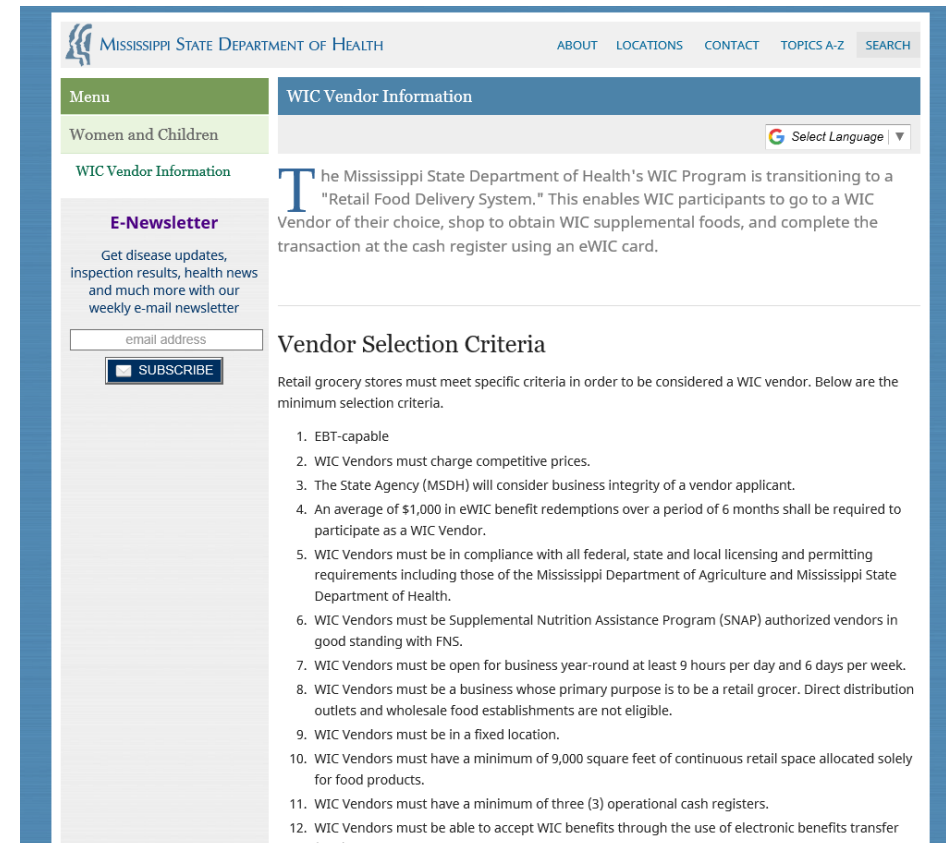
ANY QUESTIONS?



WHERE TO GET MORE INFORMATION?

Visit our website at
<https://msdh.ms.gov/>

Email us at vmu@msdh.ms.gov



The screenshot displays the Mississippi State Department of Health (MSDH) website. The header includes the MSDH logo and navigation links: ABOUT, LOCATIONS, CONTACT, TOPICS A-Z, and a SEARCH button. A language selection dropdown is set to "Select Language". The left sidebar contains a "Menu" with "Women and Children" selected, and a "WIC Vendor Information" section with an "E-Newsletter" sign-up form. The main content area is titled "WIC Vendor Information" and features a paragraph about the transition to a "Retail Food Delivery System." Below this is a section titled "Vendor Selection Criteria" which lists 12 requirements for WIC vendors.

WIC Vendor Information

Select Language ▼

E-Newsletter

Get disease updates, inspection results, health news and much more with our weekly e-mail newsletter

email address

WIC Vendor Information

The Mississippi State Department of Health's WIC Program is transitioning to a "Retail Food Delivery System." This enables WIC participants to go to a WIC Vendor of their choice, shop to obtain WIC supplemental foods, and complete the transaction at the cash register using an eWIC card.

Vendor Selection Criteria

Retail grocery stores must meet specific criteria in order to be considered a WIC vendor. Below are the minimum selection criteria.

1. EBT-capable
2. WIC Vendors must charge competitive prices.
3. The State Agency (MSDH) will consider business integrity of a vendor applicant.
4. An average of \$1,000 in eWIC benefit redemptions over a period of 6 months shall be required to participate as a WIC Vendor.
5. WIC Vendors must be in compliance with all federal, state and local licensing and permitting requirements including those of the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Mississippi State Department of Health.
6. WIC Vendors must be Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) authorized vendors in good standing with FNS.
7. WIC Vendors must be open for business year-round at least 9 hours per day and 6 days per week.
8. WIC Vendors must be a business whose primary purpose is to be a retail grocer. Direct distribution outlets and wholesale food establishments are not eligible.
9. WIC Vendors must be in a fixed location.
10. WIC Vendors must have a minimum of 9,000 square feet of continuous retail space allocated solely for food products.
11. WIC Vendors must have a minimum of three (3) operational cash registers.
12. WIC Vendors must be able to accept WIC benefits through the use of electronic benefits transfer

NEXT SESSION

September 26 at 12pm CT

TOPICS

Minimum stock requirements

Approved Product List

Key schedule dates

October 3, 2019 12pm CT

TOPICS

Application Guidance

Review of Required Documents



THANK YOU

